

RMSC Lane Etiquette

Real People, Real Goals, Real Results

Lane Etiquette

The following is a compilation of our club's guidelines and practices to assist both new and experienced swimmers with basic lane etiquette.

Lane Placement

New swimmers will be assessed by the coach and assigned a lane. If you are unsure whether you should move to another lane, consult with the coach.

Lane Direction

Lawson: Typically, the lanes are set up as individual lanes. You swim up one side of the lane, beside the lane rope and to one side of the black line on the bottom. You then turn and swim back on the other side of the lane.

UofR: Lanes here are sometimes set up in sets of two lanes. You swim up one side of the lane, then share the space with the neighbouring lane on your way back. As much as possible, you stay on 'your side' of the middle space.

Starting the Workout

If you are not starting at the same time as the rest of the lane (e.g. you are tardy or chatting with the coach), check where your lane is and join in at this point of the workout. Take your first few lengths easy to warm up and then adjust your effort when you are ready.

Spacing

Proper spacing in the lane makes for the best work-out for all. The rule of thumb is to leave 5 seconds behind the swimmer in front when there are 4 or more swimmers in the lane. You watch the pace clock and leave at the appropriate time. With fewer swimmers, you may even want to leave a larger gap, such as 10 seconds.

If you are swimming too close to the swimmer ahead of you, you make their swimming harder and your swimming easier. This distorts the relative speed of the swimmers. It also increases the likelihood of accidentally touching their feet. Being too close also makes turning more difficult for both and increases the chance of collision.

Always being aware of others in your lane is critical to avoiding collisions. For example, it may be necessary to switch to one-arm butterfly to avoid contact with

someone swimming in the opposite direction.

Order of Swimmers within a Lane

Swimmers in a lane should be ordered from fastest to slowest. If a swimmer decides to switch to a slower stroke in one set, they should allow the swimmers who are doing faster strokes to go ahead of them. It is not uncommon for the order of swimmers to change several times during a workout as strokes change and swimmers decide on how much effort they intend to expend. As the saying goes “talk amongst yourselves”.

Following the Workout

You have joined a swim club and now have the benefit of a qualified coach and workout. Every effort should be made to follow the workout as posted on the board, recognizing that we all have our individual aches and pains that necessitate the odd adjustment.

Check out the Helpful Hints section of the website for swim practice terminology.

Passing and Being Passed

Passing should be restricted to the end of the pool as much as possible. The person being passed should move to the side of the lane at the wall to give the passing swimmer room to pass. To let a person know that you are going to pass them it is okay to touch their feet once. If you touch more often, you can expect someone to get frustrated with you. Be aware of where your lane mates are and anticipate when they may catch up to you.

Passing in the middle of the lane should only be done by skilled swimmers. The turn needs to be executed promptly, with the swimmer being passed slowing down and the passing swimmer moving by as quickly as possible. The passing swimmer must yield right of way to oncoming swimmers.

Turning and Finishing

When approaching the wall to turn, after making sure the path is clear, move towards the centre of the lane while aiming to touch and push off on the black line on the wall and then angle back immediately to the side of the lane.

Every length should end at the wall. Finishing properly is important to a smoothly functioning lane as well as to developing proper technique.

As soon as you touch the wall, you need to be aware of the person behind you. You should get out of the way of the swimmers behind you by moving quickly to the lane rope or the wall to allow the swimmer behind finish their length.

Crossing Lanes

From time to time, you may have to go across a swimming lane. As you are the unexpected body in that lane, please take precautions to ensure that the swimmers in that lane know you are there. If the swimmers are stopped at the end of the lane, calling to them and being sure they heard you works fine. If they are swimming towards you, you need to wait till they pass as they are very unlikely to see you.